

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 047765

FOR HRC DELEGATE LOWENSTEIN

FOL RPT LAGOS 2325 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ABIDJAN ACCRA ADDIS
ABABA ALGIERS AMMAN CAIRO DAKAR DAMASCUS JIDDA KINSHASA
LIBREVILLE LOME LONDON PARIS PRETORIA RABAT TEL AVIV TRIPOLI
TUNIS USUN NY CAPE TOWN IBADAN KADUNA 1 MAR 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2325

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA ADOPTS NEW MIDDLE EAST POLICY

REF: LAGOS 2059

1. DIRECTOR MEA AMERICAS DEPARTMENT EDREMODA (WHO UNFOR-
TUNATELY FROM OUR STATNDPOINT IS RETIRING FROM FOREIGN SERVICE)
VOLUNTEERED TO POLCOUNS AND VISITING AF/W OFFICERS HOUDEK AND
LOLLIS TODAY THAT NIGERIA HAD MADE "SHIFT" IN ITS MIDDLE EASTERN
POLICY. REFERRING TO EXTAFFS COMMISSIONER GARBA'S SPEECH AT
UNIVERSITY IBADAN FEBRUARY 19 (REFTEL), EDREMODA SAID ARABS HAD
BEEN "INDIFFEREN" OR AT LEAST HAD "DEMONSTRATED LITTLE INTEREST
IN" THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. MANY NIGERIAN OFFICIALS
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HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE IN
MIDDLE EAST HAD NOT BEEN RECIPROCATED. ADDITIONALLY, NIGERIA HAD
SUFFERED LOSS OF WELCOME ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THE
SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES WHICH HAD LONG BEEN STRONG SUPPORTERS OF
AFRICAN CAUSE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF AFRICAN
ACTION IN BREAKING WITH ISRAEL.

2. EDREMODA SAID THIS "RETHINKING" OF AFRICAN POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST IS NOT CONFINED TO NIGERIA. RATHER, HE ASSERTED THAT THE SAME PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE ALL OVER AFRICA. HE CAUTIONED THAT THIS REORIENTATION OF AFRICAN ATTITUDES WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ISRAEL, BUT INDICATED THAT SUCH WOULD BE THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME. NEITHER NIGERIA NOR OTHER AFRICAN STATES WOULD ACT ALONE; A GROUP OF GOVERNMENTS WOULD TAKE JOINT ACTION. AS FOR OFFICIAL NIGERIAN POSITION, FMG WOULD CONTINUE TO FAVOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO PRE-1967 BORDERS BUT RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE AREAS, E.G. JERUSALEM, FROM WHICH ISRAELIS WON'T BE BUDGED. IN UN NIGERIA WILL SUPPORT SETTLEMENT BASED ON COMPLIANCE WITH UNSC RESOLUTION 242.

3. COMMENT: GARBA WILL BE ATTENDING AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT IN CAIRO AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO REITERATE NIGERIAN UNHAPPINESS WITH LACK OF ARAB SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN CAUSE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IF NIGERIANS INTENDED TO CAUSE CONSTERNATION AMONG ARABS THEY HAVE APPARENTLY SUCCEEDED. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO FIRST HELD VIEW THAT GARBA HAD DELIVERED AND UNCLEARED SPEECH, IN LATER CONVERSATION EVIDENCED REAL CONCERN THAT THERE HAD BEEN A POLICY SHIFT. TODAY'S MEETING WITH EDREMODA SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT NIGERIANS HAVE INDEED TAKEN A SECOND LOOK. WHETHER OR NOT ARABS CAN PLACATE FMG AND OTHER ARICANS IN CAIRO UNCERTAIN, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT NIGERIANS IN FUTURE TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE EVEN-HANDED IN THEIR APPROACH TO MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION THAN THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE THE BREAK WITH TEL AVIV IN 1973.

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UNQUOTE VANCE

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: PBUNGE:AH
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